(c) whether the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has advocated for continuation of ADC in order to support BSNL in its rural telephony efforts;

(d) if so, whether Government have taken any decision in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) *vide* para 98 of its. "The Telecommunication Interconnection Usage Charges Regulation, 2003 dated 29.10.2003" noted that the ideal regime would be a Universal Service Obligation (USO) type regime that is both simple to implement and does not impose regulatory incentives/disincentives based on differential ADC burden for different kinds of calls. The Authority is of the opinion that the prevailing ADC regime should be made to transition towards an USO-type of regime by 2008-09.

(c) to (e) Department of Telecommunications is of the opinion that ADC should continue in order to provide support for affordable tariffs. TRAI has been apprised accordingly.

Access deficit charge

749. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have put an embargo on the release of Access Deficit Charge (ADC) order;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the total charges collected from consumers towards the ADC to fund rural telephony since 2003;

(d) the amount utilized for rural telephony from the charges collected from consumers during the same period; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to reduce the burden on consumers without compromising Government collections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) and (d) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is the major recipient of Access Deficit Charge (ADC). BSNL has stated that there was no mechanism of maintaining separate records of incoming traffic in its network originated from its own network. Due to this, the amount of ADC during the first IUC regime, which was applicable from 1.5.2003 to 31.1.2004 cannot be separately estimated. IUC receipts of BSNL for the period from 1.2.2004 to 31.1.2005 and 1.2.2005 to 31.1.2006 are estimated to be Rs. 4559/- crores and Rs. 3700/- crores respectively. ADC is not meant only for rural networks but is also meant for providing affordable telecommunication services in semi-urban and urban areas. Separate records for traffic meant for termination in urban/semi-urban and rural areas are also not maintained in the network of BSNL. The total charges, therefore, actually collected from consumers towards ADC to fund rural telephony since 2003 and the amount utilized for rural telephones from the charges collected from consumers during the same period has not been maintained.

(e) ADC is shared between various service providers and does not accrue to the Government. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a Regulation on 23.2.2006 migrating ADC from per minute basis to revenue share basis for domestic segment.

Quality of service provided by cellular operators

750. DR. M. A. M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality of reception of many mobile service providers is not very satisfactory;

(b) if so, the reason therefor;

(c) whether Government have directed the cellular operators to improve their quality of service;

(d) if so, the reaction of the cellular operators thereto; and